IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-12. (Cancelled)

13.   (New)   An automation device (12, 14), comprising a control unit (20), which, during a period of operating time for the automation device (12, 14) performs operations involving the transmitting and/or receiving of data from peripheral units (30), a module (32) for registering at least the operating time performed by the automation device (12, 14), and an evaluation unit (38, 46) for calculating a user fee,

wherein the automation device (12, 14) is designed as a storage programmable control with a control element (20) designed as CPU for carrying out operations according to a consumer software component,

wherein the module (32) detects the operating time of the CPU (20) as well as operations in form of cycle times of the CPU (20) when carrying out the consumer software component,

wherein the evaluation unit (38, 46) is equipped with a calculating table, in which the recorded operating times and the cycle times for specific operations are assigned different debit amounts, and

wherein the calculating table (38, 46) is connected to a memory unit (39, 44) used to store an amount of operating

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credit which is automatically deducted with the calculated debit amounts or used to store accumulated debit amounts for rendering.

14. (New) A method of leasing an automation device, comprising the steps of:

measuring an operating time of a CPU during execution of actions of a consumer software and allocation of a special debit amount in accordance with the executed actions,

measuring cycle times of the CPU during the execution of actions of the customer software and allocation of a special credit amount in accordance with the executed actions,

calculating a user fee,

by diminishing a stored operation credit by the debit amounts allocated to the acquired operating times and cycle times or by accumulation of the debit amounts allocated to the measured operating times and cycle times and by invoicing,

interrupting the operation of the automation device upon consumption of the operation credit or non-settlement of invoice.

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